

# **Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Progress Report**



**King County**  
**Department of Community  
and Human Services**  
**January 2013**

## I. INTRODUCTION

King County is currently launching a county-wide community effort to create a more coordinated system that will enhance service delivery for homeless youth and young adults – quickly connecting them back with family when it is safe and appropriate to do so, or providing the immediate intervention needed to obtain safe housing. The promising news around this effort is that many individuals and groups in our King County community care deeply for homeless young people and are willing to do things differently. The following are examples of the community support we have heard to date:

- Public funders are committed to prioritizing public dollars toward the most effective services for homeless youth and young adults (YYA) through a coordinated system that will respond more efficiently to the needs of each homeless young person, and will give us clear data around the need and prevalence of YYA homelessness that can be used for continuous system improvement. Public funders are working side-by-side and in coordination with YYA providers and private foundations.
- Homeless YYA providers and agency leaders are committed to implementing challenging system changes in order to prevent YYA homelessness and provide the most effective interventions possible.
- Private foundations concerned about homeless young people, including the Raikes Foundation, Medina Foundation, Giddens Foundation, Champion Foundation, Seattle Foundation, Ballmer Foundation, and Gates Foundation have placed new resources behind this effort and are dedicated to making coordinated funding decisions and supporting community-wide data collection and use.
- Homeless young people themselves are involved, and remain dynamic, hopeful, and important sources of information around the Homeless YYA Initiative – particularly through new community-based efforts to involve young people in advocacy.

King County is poised to be a national leader around how to best address homelessness among youth and young adults.

## II. HISTORY OF THE YYA HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE

In 2011, the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness Mid-Plan Review identified homeless youth and young adults as a population we needed to know more about and to serve through a more comprehensive approach. A broad community effort was launched to improve the system serving YYA's who become homeless. Private funders, working with the King County Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), the City of Seattle, and the United Way of King County, identified three priority strategies to lay the foundation for ending YYA homelessness in King County. These priority strategies are:

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Coordinated Engagement
- Data Coordination

It is worth noting that while the above priority strategies do not end YYA homelessness in themselves, they strengthen the efficiency of our system to better serve homeless young people and to deliver new data about the scope of the problem and what works best to address it. The application of these strategies in 2013 will result in a Comprehensive Plan to End YYA Homelessness in King County by 2020 (hereinafter “Comprehensive YYA Plan”).

In July 2011, a task force was formed under the auspices of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEHKC) to develop an action plan for key strategies to move the initiative forward. The task force involved extensive community engagement: More than 100 stakeholders, including 30 homeless YYA’s, gave input to the implementation plan.

The process was guided by two groups: 1) the YYA Funders Group, including DCHS, which continues to meet; and 2) the YYA Homelessness Task Force, including CEHKC, King County DCHS, the Workforce Development Council and many others. The Task Force has concluded its work and transitioned into the 2013 YYA Advisory Group under the CEHKC Investment Priority Charter for the YYA Homelessness Initiative.

In April 2012, the CEHKC Governing Board, CEHKC Interagency Council, YYA Homelessness Task Force, and YYA Funders group endorsed “Priority Action Steps to Prevent and End Youth/Young Adult Homelessness: An Implementation Plan.”<sup>1</sup> The plan, compiled by Building Changes, established immediate next steps to move the prevention and early intervention, coordinated engagement, and data coordination strategies forward.

In August 2012, the United Way of King County and the Raikes Foundation entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with King County DCHS. The MOA outlined \$1,510,440 in new private dollars over three years to fund a lead homeless YYA initiative project manager, the launch of coordinated engagement, and Information Technology development and programming of the coordinated engagement Homeless Management Information System data collection module. King County DCHS likewise secured funding from the Veterans and Human Services Levy to hire a Project/Program Manager II to support the initiative.

Megan Gibbard was hired in September 2012 as the Homeless YYA Project Manager. Megan was formerly the Executive Director of Teen Feed, a small nonprofit meal program in the University District. She brings eight years of direct service experience with homeless YYA and a strong collaborative mission focus to the initiative. Hiring for a Project/Program Manager II is in process.

### III. OVERSIGHT AND INPUT

The Homeless YYA Initiative is *conveyed* through monthly stakeholder forums, *guided* by vigorous community input, and ultimately *directed* by aligned and involved public and private funders.

#### Oversight: CEHKC Funders Group and the YYA Funders Group

The CEHKC Funders Group and the YYA Funders group, working collaboratively, are ultimately directing the YYA Homelessness Initiative. What is notable within the YYA Homelessness Initiative is the strong potential for greater alliance between the public and private funders. Overlap exists between the CEHKC Funders Group, YYA Funders Group, and the YYA Advisory Group – intersection which serves to strengthen communication and commitment to the Comprehensive Plan. Membership of the YYA Funders Group is listed in the Priority Action Steps Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.CEHKc.org/DOC\\_reports/YYAHomelessness.pdf](http://www.CEHKc.org/DOC_reports/YYAHomelessness.pdf)

Input: YYA Advisory Group

The YYA Advisory group, with membership defined by the CEHKC Investment Priority Charter for the YYA Homelessness Initiative, is the guiding body for the YYA Homelessness Initiative. The group is a body of experts in YYA homelessness and services, and acts in an advisory role. The group will provide feedback during implementation of “Priority Action Steps to Prevent and End Youth/Young Adult Homelessness” and the drafting of the Comprehensive YYA Plan.

Members of the Advisory Group were selected based on representation of priority populations, regions, and systems; while also respecting the need to maintain a reasonable working size for the group. Initial 2013 Advisory Group members are as follows:

Member	Affiliation	Affiliation Notes
Hazel Cameron	4C Coalition	Provider, South Seattle
Edith Elion	Atlantic Street Center	Provider, South Seattle
Jim Blanchard	Auburn Youth Resources	Provider, South County
Mark Putnam	Building Changes	YYA Funder Group
Grace McClelland	City of Seattle Human Services Department	City of Seattle
Casey Trupin	Columbia Legal Services	Advocacy/Legal
Anna Markee	Committee to End Homelessness	Committee to End Homelessness
Terry Pottmeyer	Friends of Youth	Provider, East County
Antonio Lewis	Highline Public Schools	Schools, South County
Megan Gibbard (Chair)	Housing and Community Development	YYA Project Manager
Dennis Wright	Issaquah School District	Schools, East County
Mary Bourguignon	King County Council	King County Council
Betsy Jones	King County Executive's Office	King County Executive's Office
Katy Miller	King County Housing & Community Development	Housing
Kristin Winkel	King County Housing Authority	Housing
Jennifer Hill	King County Out of School Youth Consortium	Employment
Marcus Stubblefield	King County United for Youth	Juvenile Justice/Child Welfare
Adrienne Quinn	Medina Foundation	YYA Funder Group
Jim Vollendroff	Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division	Chemical Dependency
Jim Theofelis	Mockingbird Society	Advocacy/Foster Care
Katie Hong	Raikes Foundation	YYA Funder Group
Rowena Harper	Street Youth Ministries	Provider, Faith Based
Shannon Perez-Darby	The Northwest Network	GLBTQ Youth
Sara Levin	United Way of King County	YYA Funder Group
Rick Butt	Washington State DSHS	Washington State DSHS
Sean Walsh	YMCA	Provider
Melinda Giovengo	YouthCare	Provider

Input: Stakeholder Forums

Monthly stakeholder forums are open opportunities to hear about the planning and implementation of a homeless YYA system in King County. The first forum was held on December 11, 2012 with attendance by over 60 providers, funders, young people and King County staff. Led by the Homeless YYA Project Manager, the forums are also designed for committed stakeholders to find opportunities to be involved in the initiative. They are information-rich, transparent, and mission-focused.

Input: New Efforts to Hear Youth Voice

An emerging project of the Mockingbird Society will elevate homeless and formerly homeless YYA voice in the initiative. (The Mockingbird Society is a local organization whose mission is to “advocate for systems reform based on the personal experiences of children, youth, and families impacted by the foster care system.”<sup>2</sup> Their Executive Director participates in the YYA Advisory Group.) Mockingbird Society is piloting an effort to support homeless and formerly homeless young people in county-wide advocacy, including input to the Comprehensive YYA Plan. This sustained youth voice – facilitated by staff who will give young people the training and debriefing necessary to advocate effectively – stands in place of earlier strategies to include one or two youth voices at a table too often overpowered by other experts.

**IV. WORK ACCOMPLISHED TO DATE**

Work accomplished to date covers October through December 2012. These first three months represent the early start-up phase of the initiative. More robust progress updates will follow in subsequent reports when the priority strategies are further underway.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Two new countywide prevention and early intervention efforts have begun as part of the YYA Homelessness Initiative: National Safe Place and Project SAFE. YouthCare is the lead agency on both programs, with funding from the United Way of King County, the Medina Foundation, the Giddens Foundation and King County.

Both programs, National Safe Place and Project SAFE, will be aligned with the additional prevention and diversion opportunities built into the design of coordinated engagement.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/index.php/about-us/our-mission>

National Safe Place	<p>Quickly connects runaway and homeless youth ages 12-17 to services, either by reuniting them with their family or providing them with emergency shelter. National Safe Place is administered in King County by YouthCare, Auburn Youth Resources, and Friends of Youth in partnership with local businesses and non-profit organizations that have volunteered to be “Safe Places.” If a youth arrives at a Safe Place site and reports having nowhere to go, staff can call and within 45 minutes a Safe Place Coordinator will arrive to provide assistance. A teen in crisis can also call or text the Safe Place program directly to access immediate support.</p> <p>National Safe Place will be expanded in the first quarter of 2013 by adding new “Safe Places” and through increased outreach to teens and referral sites.</p>
Project SAFE	<p>Phone-based clinical consultation for parents/caregivers responsible for a youth 12–17 in crisis: youth who have run away from home or who are at risk of running away. Referrals are made directly from parents, via sister agencies or through National Safe Place. The family therapist assists parents and caregivers in developing an action plan that confronts issues that may be underlining their teen’s behaviors, often making referrals for ongoing outside individual or family counseling. Project SAFE is modeled after Cocoon House in Everett.</p> <p>Project SAFE will start in the first quarter of 2013.</p>

### Coordinated Engagement

A coordinated engagement system will direct young people’s access to housing by coordinating their applications, applying a common strengths-based assessment, and placing them in programs that have worked for other young people like them. The system will provide:

- A clearly identified process for YYA’s to request housing
- Housing placements at a system-wide level that matches YYA’s with the most appropriate services based on their strengths-based assessment, as well as program capacity and eligibility
- Alignment with the existing Family Housing Connection coordinated entry system
- Unduplicated data on the number of homeless YYA’s, their needs, and community best practices in YYA housing – information which will directly inform the Comprehensive YYA Plan.

### Accomplished to Date:

- The initial coordinated engagement system design has been completed by the work group, which represents YYA providers, Family Housing Connection, and YYA housing programs.

- Design was presented at the inaugural YYA Stakeholder Forum and initial YYA housing provider and agency leadership commitment to the design is secured.

Upcoming Benchmarks:

- An overview of the coordinated engagement system design will be presented to the YYA Advisory Group on January 7, 2013. Separate focus groups with YYA housing providers, case managers, South Seattle youth/family providers, young people, and funders are scheduled for late January.
- Assessment tool and housing inventory development is in progress.
- A Request for Proposal is tentatively scheduled to be released in late January, in which an agency will be selected to manage the YYA coordinated engagement system.

Data Coordination

The data coordination effort will be driving towards a synchronized data system for assessing community progress toward the goal of ending YYA homelessness, beginning with a coordinated engagement database. The data system will be integrated within Safe Harbors, support coordination of services, measure community-wide outcomes, including Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) measures, and will answer the following key questions: *What is the need and what works to address it? Are we making progress?*

Accomplished to Date:

- Project plan established for parallel and integrated concept development of YYA coordinated engagement and case management functions through the IT manager of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for Safe Harbors<sup>3</sup>
- Technical project manager has been selected to guide the initiative's data integration work with the Safe Harbors and Family Housing Connection systems
- A data coordination work group has been selected, including representation from Family Housing Connection, Safe Harbors, and agency partners.

Upcoming Benchmarks:

- Development of the coordinated engagement data system will be completed early in the 2nd quarter of 2013. This data system will be aligned with the existing Family Housing Connection database, with a different "view."
- Initial data will be pulled from the coordinated engagement system to inform the development of the Comprehensive YYA Plan. Data system enhancements will be made as needed.

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<sup>3</sup> Adsystech, Inc.

## V. EARLY LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation of the YYA Homelessness Initiative is in the early stages, thus there are few lessons learned to date. There are a number of community strengths that we have identified as assets in moving forward, as follows:

1. **King County homeless youth/young adult providers are committed to the success of the homeless YYA initiative and the system change effort**, as evidenced by agency leadership at the table, front line staff attitudes to the change, and commitment of staff time to the planning effort in work groups and forums. At the recent YYA Stakeholder Forum, attendees were not without difficult questions about how the system change efforts would impact young people or agencies – but the approach in the room was one of hope and commitment.
2. **Homeless youth and young adults are involved and offering meaningful input to the initiative**. Through YYA focus groups as part of the 2011 task force and the upcoming youth advocacy pilot, young people have been at the table and will continue to be strong partners in how we will address YYA homeless in King County.
3. **Public and private funders are working together to deepen our communities' response strategy** so that homelessness among young people in King County is met with the most effective and caring solutions. Through the CEHKC's Funders Group and the YYA Funders Group, investments are being made with our best coordinated thinking and strategy and a willingness to partner.



**Priority:** Youth/Young Adult Homelessness Initiative  
**Sponsor(s):** King County Department of Community and Human Services  
**Lead Staffing:** Megan Gibbard, Project/Program Manager III  
**Key Partners:** United Way of King County, Raikes Foundation with the Youth/Young Adult Funders Group, Building Changes, Department of Social and Health Services, City of Seattle, Providers, youth and young adults

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## **I. PURPOSE STATEMENT/SYSTEM CHANGE GOALS**

The Youth/Young Adult (YYA) Homelessness Initiative will create a more accessible and aligned system of housing and services for youth and young adults across King County. The system will prevent youth in crisis from becoming homeless, reconnect youth with family when it is safe and appropriate to do so; will engage YYA immediately when they do experience homelessness and match them to the housing and services that most fit their needs and best practices; and will collect system-wide data to understand progress towards ending YYA homelessness. System change will focus initially on four key areas, identified in more detail in “Priority Action Steps to Prevent and End Youth/Young Adult Homelessness,” and will be implemented over three years:

1. **Prevention and Early Intervention:** Partner with the YYA Funders on prevention strategies related to: 1) early intervention for runaways, an immediate response to YYA’s who leave home to connect them with support and a safe place to stay, including reconnection with family where appropriate; and 2) prevention services for families experiencing crisis with tools to stabilize and keep their youth safely in the home.
2. **Coordinated Engagement:** Direct young people’s access to housing by coordinating their applications, applying a common strengths-based assessment, and placing them in programs that have worked for other YYA’s like them. Providing:
  - A clearly identified process for YYA’s to request housing.
  - Coordinated housing placements at a system-wide level that matches YYA’s with the most appropriate services based on their strengths-based assessment, as well as program capacity and eligibility.
  - Unduplicated data on the number of homeless YYA’s and their needs/barriers.
  - Alignment with the existing Family Housing Connection coordinated entry system.
  - Community standards around best and/or promising practices in YYA housing.
3. **Data Coordination:** Realize a coordinated data system for assessing community progress toward the goal of ending YYA homelessness. The data system will be integrated within Safe Harbors, support coordination of services, measure community-wide outcomes including Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH measures), and answer the following key questions: What’s the need and what works to address it? Are we making progress?
4. **Comprehensive YYA Planning:** Conduct YYA landscape assessment. Informed by this assessment, best/promising practices and initial YYA coordinated engagement data; develop recommendations for YYA housing and service needs (goals, types and quantity). Design the Comprehensive Plan to End YYA Homelessness in King County by 2020 (the “Comprehensive YYA Plan” in this document) with broad stakeholder input and buy-in.

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## **II. KEY MILESTONES AND TIMELINE**

### Goal 1: Prevention and Early Intervention

- Ongoing collaboration and monitoring with YYA Funders.
- Seek opportunities and alignment with family homelessness system.

Goal 2: Coordinated Engagement

- Completed: Initial system design completed by the coordinated engagement advisory group under the auspices of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County (CEHKC) Youth/Young Adult Task Force. Initial YYA housing provider commitment secured.
- 4th Quarter 2012: Coordinated Engagement system design finalized through provider working group. YYA housing inventory and assessment tools complete.
- 1st Half 2013: Community/youth outreach and engagement. RFP released and agency/entity selected to manage coordinated engagement. Appropriate interface with family coordinated entry is confirmed. Begin modifications to policies and contracts and continue realigning funding as RFPs occur.
- 2nd Half 2013: Community/youth engagement continues. Coordinated engagement and corresponding data system launched. Initial data pulled from coordinated engagement system.

Goal 3: Data Coordination

- 4th Quarter 2012: Parallel but integrated concept development of the Coordinated Engagement and Case Management functions through Adsystem for Safe Harbors HMIS.
- 1st Half 2013: Development of the coordinated engagement system completed. Training manuals developed. Initial system exists to draw client satisfaction/evaluation data.
- 2nd Half 2013: Agency to manage coordinated engagement selected and trained. Initial data pulled from the coordinated engagement system. Data system enhancements made as needed.

Goal 4: Comprehensive YYA Planning

- 4th Quarter 2012: Communication with the community/youth to assure common understanding and continue building support around YYA system change.
- 1st Half 2013: Conduct YYA landscape assessment and research around best/promising practices for YYA. Receive initial input re: the Comprehensive YYA Plan from the community and YYA Advisory Group. Identify opportunities for professional development/peer learning. Pull baseline data from Safe Harbors. Public funding is initially aligned with planning direction.
- 2nd Half 2013: The Comprehensive YYA Plan finalized, including: best practices for prevention/family reunification, variances to address needs of YYA, regional variances, strategies around integrating service delivery across systems, capacity building, and cost modeling. Public funding is aligned with the plan. Implementation of YYA system changes, including input at community forums, determine need for training and continuum philosophy change.

**III. POLICY ISSUES**

- Determine system response to McKinney-Vento Act reauthorization under the Homeless Emergency and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, implicating new requirements for services to YYA.
- Coordinate across systems that impact vulnerable youth, including employment, public schools, juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health and chemical dependency, particularly efforts to prevent youth involved in these other systems from entering the “homeless system.”
- Identify engagement and service challenges and solutions related to all YYA with particular focus on youth of color, LGBTQ youth, and youth struggling with severe mental illness and/or addiction.
- Prioritize YYA funding in the context of CEHKC priorities toward the most effective and efficient programs faced with finite resources.
- Bring mainstream systems on board to help serve homeless YYA’s.

**IV. RESOURCES**

- The Raikes Foundation and United Way of King County have committed a total of \$1,510,440 to date to the initiative between 2012-2015 to support the YYA Project Manager, a staff position housed at King County, launch of coordinated engagement, coordination of enhancements in Safe Harbors, and comprehensive planning.
- The YYA Funders Group has committed to looking at how they can further support the implementation of the above priority action steps. To date, the YYA Funders Group has identified over \$3M total in new funding in support of the initiative.
- DCHS has \$280,000 projected to support a two-year Project/Program Manager II in service to the initiative. A further \$544,000 in housing capital and services funding is projected to be available in the 2013 funding round specifically targeted for YYA housing and services pending council approval in 2012. The intention is to leverage other funding sources as well, coordinated through the Comprehensive YYA Plan.
- Nationally, increasing awareness and political will around homeless YYA presents an opportunity to obtain greater resources.

Still Needed

- Refinement of costs to implement the key areas.
- Ultimately, additional long term resources need to be addressed through the Comprehensive YYA Plan.

**V. BARRIERS ENCOUNTERED**

- Resources are currently being dedicated to YYA interventions in advance of the landscape analysis and Comprehensive YYA Plan anticipated in late 2013. These are resources that would be better leveraged if coordinated through the comprehensive plan.

**VI. ROLE FOR GOVERNING BOARD/IAC/STAKEHOLDERS**

- Governing Board: Understand both the priorities of the existing implementation plan and the targets of the Comprehensive YYA Plan when it is completed in 2013. Help build political will to sustain ambitious goals.
- IAC: Provide across-systems input on work plan implementation.
- Funders group: Determine how to mesh these priorities with other funding priorities.
- Stakeholders (e.g., YYA Funders Group, Advocacy Group (Mockingbird), other systems and jurisdictions etc.): Collaborate on implementing the plan. Move forward with courage as we change our YYA system to better serve young people.

**VII. ROLE FOR YYA ADVISORY GROUP**Purpose/Charter Statement:

The Advisory Group is not a governing body and operates in an advisory function only – a body of experts regarding the Youth/Young Adult Homelessness Initiative investment priority. It will provide feedback to the implementation of “Priority Action Steps to Prevent and End Youth/Young Adult Homelessness,” specifically as it relates to:

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Coordinated Engagement
- Data Coordination
- Comprehensive Plan to End YYA Homelessness in King County by 2020

Date Established/Projected Completion Date

- Established: January 2013
- Completion: January 2014

Chair: Megan Gibbard

Members, Affiliations:

Member	Affiliation	Affiliation Notes
Hazel Cameron	4C Coalition	Provider, South Seattle
Edith Elion	Atlantic Street Center	Provider, South Seattle
Jim Blanchard	Auburn Youth Resources	Provider, South County
Mark Putnam	Building Changes	YYA Funder Group
Grace McClelland	City of Seattle Human Services Department	City of Seattle
Casey Trupin	Columbia Legal Services	Advocacy/Legal
Anna Markee	Committee to End Homelessness	Committee to End Homelessness
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Megan Gibbard (Chair)	Housing and Community Development	YYA Project Manager
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Shannon Perez-Darby	The Northwest Network	GLBTQ Youth
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Sean Walsh	YMCA	Provider
Melinda Giovengo	YouthCare	Provider

Members and affiliations include community partners, funders, and field experts from the diverse geographic locations, agencies and specialties for input and oversight of the implementation of the YYA Homelessness Initiative investment priority.

To supplement involvement from additional stakeholders, there will be various opportunities for involvement (e.g. monthly stakeholder and youth engagement forums, ad hoc workgroups, staff involvement with community-based initiatives such as the newly formed Advocacy Committee, and

strategic outreach to established community meetings) as well as intentional work with the YYA Funders Group. See community engagement strategy (both below and included in Attachment B).

#### Tasks/Strategies

The key anticipated tasks for this committee the first year are:

- Review coordinated engagement system design, housing inventory, assessment tools, and processes recommended by the lead staff.
- Ensure that work items are aligned toward the development of the Comprehensive YYA Plan.
- Act as a liaison of the Youth/Young Adult Homelessness Initiative, communicating to all regional and countywide stakeholder groups they participate in, as well as bringing news and updates from the community back to the Advisory Group and staff team.
- Support the alignment of community efforts to end YYA homelessness; including the YYA Funders Group.
- Lead reporting/consulting with elected officials.

#### Documentation/Product Expected

The Advisory Group will explicitly advise the Comprehensive YYA Plan. Documentation will include monthly CEHKC newsletter reports, minutes on the website, updates to funders group and IAC.

#### Meeting Frequency

Full committee meets monthly. Each meeting will be two hours long. Break out work groups will meet as needed and will be open to committed participants.

#### Recommendations and Reporting

Updates will be reported to the Funders Group and IAC on a semi-annual basis.

